



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: Greater Atlantic Region Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ Administration.

OMB Control Number: 0648-0240.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Regular (extension of a currently approved information collection).

Number of Respondents: 189.

Average Hours Per Response: ITQ permit application form, review of a pre-filled ITQ ownership form for renewing entities, ITQ transfer form, 5 minutes each; 1 hour to complete the ITQ ownership form for new applicants; and 30 minutes for the application to shuck surfclams and ocean quahogs at sea. The requirements under the PSP protocol are based on the number of vessels that land surfclams or ocean quahogs and the number of trips taken into the area, with a total estimated annual burden of 2,400 hours.

Burden Hours: 2,538.

Needs and Uses: This request is for an extension of a currently approved collection associated with the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Greater Atlantic Region manages these fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Northeastern United States through the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council prepared the FMP pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

The recordkeeping and reporting requirements at §§ 648.74, 648.75, and 648.76 form the basis for this collection of information. We request information from surfclam and ocean quahog individual transferable quota (ITQ) permit holders to issue ITQ permits and to process and track requests from permit holders to transfer quota share or cage tags. We also request information from surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ permit holders to track and properly account for surfclam and ocean quahog harvest shucked at sea. Because there is not a standard conversion factor for estimating unshucked product from shucked product, NMFS requires vessels that shuck product at sea to carry on board the vessel a NMFS-approved observer to certify the amount of these clams harvested. This information, upon receipt, results in an efficient and accurate database for management and monitoring of fisheries of the Northeastern U.S. EEZ.

Georges Bank has been closed to the harvest of surfclams and ocean quahogs since 1990 due to red tide blooms that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). In 2013, a portion of Georges Bank was reopened with certain restrictions. We request information from surfclam and

ocean quahog ITQ permit holders who fish in the reopened portion of the Georges Bank Closed Area to ensure compliance with the Protocol for Onboard Screening and Dockside Testing in Molluscan Shellfish. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the commercial fishing industry, and NMFS developed the PSP protocol to test and verify that clams harvested from Georges Bank continue to be safe for human consumption. The National Shellfish Sanitation Program adopted the PSP protocol at the October 2011 Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Frequency: Annually and on occasion.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

This information collection request may be viewed at reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-5806.

Dated: December 3, 2015.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

BILLING CODE: 3510-22-P.

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